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**Contact: Office of Public Affairs
(202) 482-4883**

**Remarks of U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez
International Boston Seafood Show
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Boston**

Thank you for the very kind introduction. Boston is a great city, with many of America's top universities, great global brand-name companies, and leading high-tech innovators. And as one of our oldest cities, Boston is also home to America's first colonial industry, the 400-year old fishing industry.

As most of you know, New England fisheries have been among the richest and most productive in the world. But they have suffered in recent decades for many reasons, primarily from overfishing.

Today I want to talk about the future of the fishing industry and what needs to be done to get this important industry competing, innovating, and growing again.

As more and more consumers become aware of how they can improve their health by eating seafood, demand for seafood will surely keep rising. And the best way to meet that rising demand is by managing wild fisheries effectively, and by expanding our seafood production through aquaculture.

The significance of our marine fishery resources is clear. It's a \$65 billion industry and a mainstay for countless communities along the nation's 12,000 miles of coastline. As the industry grows it's expected to create some 25,000 new jobs and support another 75,000 in other industries.

First, we have to deal with the problems of overfishing and the impact they are having on these communities.

- The Magnuson-Stevens law that was recently reauthorized does exactly that. Getting this new law was one of the top priorities in President Bush's Ocean Action Plan.
- This new law is vital for our commercial fisheries. It sets a firm deadline to end overfishing by 2010. And it will help rebuild our fish stocks through more effective, market-based management, and by aggressively enforcing annual catch limits.

Ending overfishing is part of the broader plan to promote healthy oceans. For this, the President is seeking \$140 million.

As part of that package, the President wants a \$25 million increase for programs to ensure the sustainable use of our ocean marine resources. He is requesting another \$38 million to preserve sensitive marine areas, including \$8 million for management and enforcement activities in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

Last June, President Bush created the world's largest fully-protected marine area by making these islands a Marine National Monument. We're now conserving 500,000 square miles of essential fish habitat and deep corals throughout the Pacific Ocean.

Despite these efforts to protect our oceans and sea life, we need new innovative solutions to keep up with rising demand for seafood. That's where aquaculture comes in.

To be honest, even with the best-managed fisheries we're not going to be able to satisfy consumer demand. The United Nations is projecting a 40 million ton global seafood shortage in 23 years (by 2030), unless something is done.

Simply put: we need both a strong commercial fishing industry and a robust aquaculture industry. Given the projections, there is plenty of room for both industries. The real question is: How can we capture more market share?

The irony of the situation is this:

Right now, 80 percent of the seafood consumed in the U.S. is imported. And 40 percent of those imports are farm-raised.

This resulted in an \$8 billion trade deficit in 2005.

So, even when we end overfishing and rebuild wild stocks, we still need U.S. aquaculture to narrow the trade gap and to keep up with consumer demand.

Aquaculture is becoming a very big market: nearly half the seafood consumed in the world today is farm-raised.

The global numbers are just stunning.

- Of the \$70 billion in aquaculture, China accounts for 70 percent of production and the rest of Asia adds another 20 percent.
- The U.S. accounts for just 1.5 percent, with only Africa lagging.

U.S. aquaculture is growing but remains small. It's now a billion dollar industry. But relative to the global industry, it's just an infant.

With 100 farms, for example, Hawaii is a leader in this young industry. But at \$40 million, Hawaii's aquaculture industry is a fraction of what it could be.

One of the biggest barriers to faster growth is a lack of access to suitable places to set up an open-ocean farm.

To help solve the problem, I'm pleased to announce that President Bush will be asking Congress to allow safe and sustainable ocean farming in federal waters. You need lots of deep water to raise fish on a large scale. And that means we need to open up federal waters to aquaculture.

The new legislation will create a regulatory framework that allows for safe and sustainable offshore operations. The bill will also safeguard the marine environment, spell out the role for states, set up a system for getting permits, and facilitate research.

We're asking Congress to act quickly to pass this legislation and give our entrepreneurs the opportunity to become global players in aquaculture.

We know they can do it. NOAA is already supporting successful open-ocean pilot projects in state waters in Hawaii, New Hampshire, and Puerto Rico.

We're also asking Congress for \$3 million to formally set up a federal aquaculture program, which will give more focus to expanding the industry.

I believe there is more that we can do to grow this industry. Clearly we're working hard to create the conditions that allow growth. But government doesn't have all the answers.

At the end of the day, aquaculture is a business. The private sector knows best how to build this industry.

To get all of us pulling in the same direction, I have a second announcement: this summer I plan to host an Aquaculture Summit. We'll be inviting government, business, and scientific leaders to Washington, seeking their views and opinions on all the key issues:

- How do we meet exploding consumer demand for seafood?
- What are the best technologies and best practices?
- How best to deal with the environmental aspects of aquaculture?
- And what are the economics of setting up a business and attracting investors?

I hope some of you will be able to join us for this important summit.

I'd like to make a final point about a problem the fisheries industry is facing: finding workers to fill jobs.

President Bush is committed to working with Congress to pass a comprehensive immigration bill. Immigration is the domestic social issue of our time. But it is as much an economic issue as it is a social issue.

Everywhere I go, business owners tell me they can't fill jobs. I know that this is a major issue for many of you, especially finding enough seasonal workers for harvesting and processing seafood and fish.

We have to face the reality that we have a labor shortage, that we need foreign labor to fill it.

This is a complex issue. We have begun to deal with it by addressing border

security. But it's only the first step.

We need comprehensive immigration reform that secures our borders, beefs up enforcement, resolves the status of the illegal population without amnesty, and creates a temporary worker program.

So, we look forward to working with all of you on the oceans agenda. We're taking a pragmatic, practical approach to these issues, by setting realistic goals through the President's Ocean Action Plan and then following through with solutions. To date, four-fifths of our goals have been achieved.

I think we have it right. This isn't about abstract concepts. It's about what works. It's about what creates jobs and makes us grow and makes us more competitive. And it's about balancing the economics with a vital need to protect our ocean resources.

I look forward to working with all of you in the weeks and months ahead.

Thank you very much.

US Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20230
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Contact Secretary Gutierrez by e-mail at cgutierrez@doc.gov.
Direct inquiries about this page to webmaster@doc.gov.